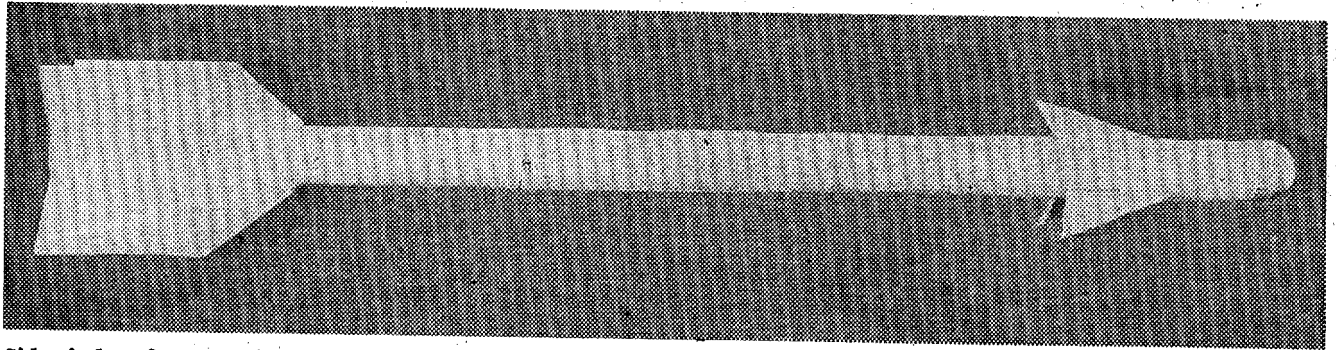


How Spies Stole Allied Missile and Sent It to Soviet



Sidewinder of type stolen from Allied base in West Germany. Nine-foot-six-inch missile was sent to the Soviet Union.

Special to The New York Times

BONN, Oct. 29—A nine-and-a-half-foot-long missile was stolen from an allied base in West Germany by three men who trundled it away in a wheelbarrow and drove more than 100 miles with the rocket nose draped in a carpet and protruding from a shattered car window, a federal prosecutor disclosed today.

En route, the men—including a "Mr. X" — stopped for gasoline, and then packed the dismantled 165-pound weapon off to Moscow by air freight.

Amid mounting concern among West Germans and their allies over the possibility of an imminent major spy scandal, the prosecutor, Ludwig Martin, also disclosed in Karlsruhe today two other thefts, of navigational devices, by the same men who

smuggled out the Sidewinder. Two of the three men, he said, are under arrest.

The Sidewinder theft from a North Atlantic Treaty Organization air base, called Zell, at Neuburg on the Danube River in Bavaria last year does not appear to be a major coup for the Russians.

According to a report from Washington today by the West German news agency, DPA, the rocket is considered a relatively simple device with perhaps two dozen movable parts and no more electronic components than a radio. First developed in 1953, its main attribute is an infrared guidance system that directs it at heat-giving targets. The system has since been superseded in more advanced weapons.

"We believe that the other side had knowledge of these



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The missile was taken from the base at Neuburg (cross).

instruments before," the Bonn defense spokesman, Lothar Domröse, said.

The prosecutor's report today was set against the background of such recent epi-

sodes as the escape of six suspected agents to East Germany, three apparent suicides, including that of an admiral, and the arrest of four suspected agents, including the three accused of stealing the Sidewinder. All of this has caused an uproar in this espionage-conscious country.

Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger phoned today from Spain, where he is on a state visit, for an urgent report on West German security. Yesterday it was announced that Mr. Kiesinger and Vice Chancellor Willy Brandt would take charge of improving coordination in the security and intelligence services.

But Government spokesmen have said—and Mr. Martin reasserted today — that there is no proof that the apparent espionage cases are

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Continued From Page 1, Col. 6 related.

Speaking at a news conference, Mr. Martin said that the three men who stole the missile had parked a wheelbarrow outside the airbase. While "Mister X" waited outside, the two others—identified as Wolf Diethard Knope, a 33-year-old flight sergeant and West German Air Force pilot, and Josef Linowski, a mechanic who was born in Poland—climbed a fence and broke into the base magazine.

Then the men hauled out the air-to-air missile through a hole cut in the barbed wire. Mr. Martin said that when they discovered that the Sidewinder did not fit into their waiting car, they smashed the rear window and covered the exposed nose with a carpet.

The prosecutor did not disclose where the men drove, but said that when they reached their destination they dismantled the rocket and sent it by air freight to Moscow in a special case and a suitcase.

He did not report the hour of the theft or explain why it went unnoticed by guards.

Woman's Case Discussed

In April, 1967, Mr. Martin said, the three stole what he called an "LM-3 navigation device" from the same base. After two unsuccessful attempts, he said, they broke in and hauled the device away in a wheelbarrow, then placed it in the trunk of their car. The device reached Moscow as "tourist luggage," he reported.

Early in the year, he continued, they carried off a "a newly developed navigation device" from the display of a West German concern at the Hanover fair. That, too, was delivered to Moscow, Mr. Martin said.

The prosecutor also discussed the case of Mrs. Gisele Mock, a 48-year-old secretary at the Defense Ministry who was arrested last month on suspicion of spying, questioned and released under orders to report periodically to the police.

Mr. Martin said she had "probably" worked as an agent for an "Eastern intelligence service" since 1967 in return for \$850 and "a bedroom," but he stated that she did not have access to confidential information and did not represent a serious security danger.

tivity over the suggestion that West Germany is not fit to share confidential Western intelligence. A comment by Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford Friday that the United States considers the spy charges as a matter of the "utmost seriousness" brought a testy reply from the West German Government's spokesman. He said that Mr. Clifford was not fully informed.

Today the Westfälische Rundschau, a Dortmund newspaper, commented: "Either our prestige in Western countries has been impaired to a degree that makes our partners consider a coincidence of insignificant events a danger to Western security, or our allies know more about these events — which affect the NATO sphere — than do the Bonn agencies."

Assessment of Significance

By WILLIAM BEECHER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29 — Some Pentagon officials tended to play down the importance to Soviet intelligence of the Sidewinder missile and two aircraft navigation instruments stolen in West Germany over the last year and a half.

Numerous Sidewinder missiles have malfunctioned in air-to-air combat over North Viet-

nam, one source said, and some are presumed to have fallen intact into enemy hands.

In addition, there have been losses in the Vietnam theater of all types of American jet fighter-bombers, including the swing-wing F-111A. It is therefore also presumed that highly classified navigation and bombing instruments have reached Soviet experts through this means.

However, one ranking officer said it was foolish to consider the thefts in West Germany as unimportant and that the stolen equipment was in perfect condition, while most equipment picked up in Vietnam probably was damaged.

The Sidewinder is one of the principal air-to-air weapons for both the Navy and the Air Force. It has also been supplied to the air forces of European

allies and to Japan and Nationalist China as well.

There are at least four different models of the missile. According to unclassified information, three of the models use heat-seeking warheads that are attracted by the jet exhaust of the enemy aircraft. The fourth by radar signals from its launch aircraft or it homes in on the radar-jamming signals emitted by the attack airplane. The Russians are believed to have a heat-seeking missile, somewhat similar to the Sidewinder, called the Atoll.

If the Russians could learn how sensitive these guidance systems were, they could try to develop various types of countermeasures. And if they could study a Sidewinder that can home in on Soviet jamming signals, they could try to modify those signals in an effort to thwart the missile.

Today's disclosures followed by three weeks the death of Rear Adm. Herman Lüdke, found shot near his car in the Eifel Mountains after he had been questioned about a film showing secret allied documents. Admiral Lüdke apparently inadvertently turned in the film for development.

The wave of speculation over an imminent major spy scandal and dismay over what some influential West Germans and foreigners regard as fumbling and poor coordination by security agencies has serious psychological implications of their own here.

There is considerable sensi-